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PAGE 01 SEOUL 07601 0810307
ACTION EA-12
INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAF-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAF-00
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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY BAFlack DATE 2/12/80

P R 0809562 SEP 77
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6270
INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO
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CINCPAC FOR POLAD
E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SOPN, MPOL, KS, US
SUBJECT: KOREAN PRESS REACTION TO PRM-10
REF: STATE 213880
SUMMARY: YESTERDAY'S EVANS AND NOVAK COLUMN GETS TOP PRESS PLAY IN KOREA TODAY, WITH ONE ANALYSIS SPECULATING THAT LEAK OF PARTS OF PRM-10 MAY BE DESIGNED TO AFFECT DISPOSITION OF PAK TONG-SON CASE. END SUMMARY.
1. BOTH VERNACULAR MORNING DAILIES SEPTEMBER 8 GAVE TOP COVERAGE TO STORIES FROM THEIR WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENTS ABOUT EVANS AND NOVAK COLUMN ON PRESIDENTIAL REVIEW MEMORANDUM TEN (PRM-10) WHICH APPEARED IN WASHINGTON POST SEPTEMBER 7. ACCORDING TO ARTICLES, THIS COLUMN, ENTITLED "PRM-10 AND THE U.S. WITHDRAWAL", REVEALED THAT THE WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. TROOPS FROM KOREA WOULD PROVIDE U.S. "FLEXIBILITY" IN DECIDING WHETHER TO BECOME INVOLVED IN CASE OF AN ATTACK BY NORTH KOREA: "AFTER THE WITH-
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PAGE 02 SEOUL 07601 0810302
DRAWAL, THE DANGER OF AUTOMATIC INVOLVEMENT WOULD BE MINIMIZED." COLUMN POINTED OUT THAT THIS CONTRADICTS PRESIDENT CARTER'S PLEDGE NOT TO DEGRADE THE U.S. COMMITMENT TO KOREA AND ALSO DAMAGES PRESENT DEFENSE PLANS, WHICH ARE BASED ON THE DEFENSE OF SEOUL. COLUMN SAYS THAT KOREA IS THUS PLACED IN A DILEMMA AS TO WHAT TO BELIEVE: THE PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS OF U.S. LEADERS OR THE SECRET DOCUMENTS PREPARED BY THEIR PROFESSIONAL ADVISORS.
2. COVERAGE IN NATIONALISTIC CHOSON ILBO WAS LIMITED TO ONE BRIEF STORY ALONG ABOVE LINES, BUT HAN'GUK ILBO RAN MORE DETAILED STORY, TOGETHER WITH THREE COMPANION PIECES. FIRST OF THESE REPORTED THAT DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN HODDING CARTER CITED COMMON PRACTICE OF REFUSING TO COMMENT ON AN INTERNAL DOCUMENT UNDER DICUSSION WITHIN USG AND ADDED THAT CARTER HAD NOTED THERE WAS NO CHANGE IN U.S. COMMITMENT TO DEFEND AND SUPPORT ROK UNDER DEFENSE TREATY. RELATED ARTICLE
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ON PAGE TWO GIVES DETAILED SUMMARY OF EVANS-NOVAK COLUMN.

3. MOST SIGNIFICANT IS FRONT-PAGE COMMENTARY IN HAN'GUK ILBO, ATTRIBUTED TO WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT CHO SUN-HWAN. FIRST PART OF ANALYSIS NOTES STRONG EMPHASIS IN PRM-10 ON U.S. INTENTION NOT RPT NOT TO BE DRAWN INTO ASIAN LAND WAR AND ASSERTS THERE NEED BE NO GREAT PROBLEM WITH PRM-10, WHEN ONE NOTES IT IS BASED ON ASSUMPTION OF WORLD WAR, AND HAS NO RELATION TO SORT OF LIMITED WAR WHICH MIGHT OCCUR IN KOREAN PENINSULA. LATTER HALF OF COMMENT, HOWEVER, NOTING THAT EVANS-NOVAK COLUMN IN PAST HAS BEEN SHARPLY CIRITICAL OF CARTER ADMINISTRATION, GOES ON TO SPECULATE WHY AND HOW PRM-10 GOT OUT. NOTING

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THAT PREVIOUS EVANS-NOVAK REPORT THAT PRM-10 ENVISAGED POSSIBLE LOSS OF ONE-THIRD OF GERMANY IN EVENT OF SOVIET ATTACK HAD BEEN EVALUATED BY NEW YORK TIMES AS LEADING TO THREE-PERCENT INCREASE IN U.S. DEFENSE BUDGET AND NEW POLICY TO SGRENGTHEN CONVENTIONAL U.S. FORCES, ANALYST SPECULATES THT INTENTIONAL LEAK OF MATERIAL ON KOREA IN PRM-10, "WHICH WILL SURPRISE AND SCARE KOREAN GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC AND ENCOURAGE THE NORTHERN PUPPETS," MAY REFLECT INTENT TO AFFECT DISPOSITION OF PAK TONG-SON CASE.

4. EMBASSY CONTACTS HAVE ALREADY BEGUN TO EXPRESS CONCERN TO EMBOFFS ABOUT EFFECTS OF NEWS STORIES BASED ON EVANS AND NOVAK. PROFESSOR YI YONG-HO TOLD EMBOFF SEPT 8 THAT A NUMBER OF HIS COLLEAGUES HAD EXPRESSED CONCERN AND CONFUSION ABOUT IMPLICATIONS OF STORIES TO EFFECT US WAS RESTUDYING TIS DEFENSE LINE IN ASIA. HE URGED THAT USG CLARIFY NATURE OF PRM PROCESS. EMBASSY HAS ALREADY DONE THIS INDIRECTLY, PROVIDING EXPLANATION TO MOFA OFFICIAL AT TIME OF LAST EVANS AND NOVAK ARTICLE. MOFA THEN PROVIDED THIS EXPLANATION TO ROK PRESS. FURTHER EXPLANATORY EFFORT MAY NOW BEEN NECESSARY HOWEVER. IN VIEW OF ROK INCLINATION TO IDENTIFY PRM TEN OPTIONS WITH US DECISIONS PRIOR TO US WITHDRAWAL FROM KOREA JUST BEFORE KOREAN WAR. DEPARTMENT MAY ALSO WISH TO MAKE SPECIAL EFFORT TO EXPLAIN PRM PROCESS TO KOREAN CORRESPONDENTS IN WASHINGTON.

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